

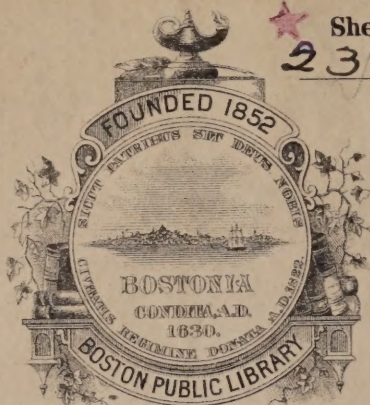
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THE GRASSHOPPER VANE ON FANEUIL HALL.

BY BENJAMIN DREW.

Muscle of the saltatorious gift,
My pen, my soul, my feet uplift
To von Insectean's height—
By "feet" I mean my understanding,
Which needs an altitude commanding,
In this iambic fight.

My nimble, prancing friend, Terpsichore,
For the plain truth a humble seeker, I
On thy sweet guidance call—
Declare to me the reason why
Yon hoppergrass was placed on high,
O'er Faneuil's ancient hall.

Long ere the pyramids were done,
The vile orthopters had begun
Their corners upon wheat—
From the broad meadows of Ugam
Went many a flying, jumping army
Whose mission was—to eat.

O'er Nubia's fields, o'er Thothmes' farms,
They yearly spread their dire alarms,
Now here, now there alighting—
The people cursed the insect race
Which jumped or flew from place to place,
Where crops were most inviting.

Now they alight on Pysgah's top,
Thence moving with a skip and hop,
They seek the promised land—
They all Jerusalem provoke,
They choke not at the artichoke—
No plants their power withstand.

*Locust and ussus—burnt the place
Which sees the dread locustean race;
Assyria feels their weight;
Still on—they darken all the air,
And the grave Persian pulls the hair
By handfuls from his pate.

On move the orthopters without ship,
And all Trinacria's acres strip;
They spoil the Goths and Van'als—
They peel from Europe all its leaves,
The starving people lose their beeves,
And mutton-chops and candles.

The sculptured ruins of the west
A learned, cultured race attest,
Some thousand years ago—
They had their jobberies and their rings,
Defaulters— all the useful things
That modern nations know.

Like us they builded, wrought and wed,
Played whist and euchre, gave a spread,
And talked of crimes and pardons;
But ah! one bright and blooming spring,
They of the coriaceous wing
Lit on their fields and gardens!

Withered and starved this ancient race;
A remnant roved from place to place,
Sans politics, sans bribes—
From them the Indians—fierce Menomonees,
Apaches, Modocs, Chickahominies,
All savage, scalping tribes.

This history Peter Faneuil knew—
He searched his Bible through and through,
Hunting for prophylactics,
The English-speaking race to save,
Threatened with famine and the grave
By shrewd orthopterous tactics.

He read, that in the Hebrew camps,
Fierce, fiery serpents bit the scamps
Who 'gainst good Moses grumbled—
That Moses—kind, forgiving soul—
Put a brass serpent on a pole—
Who looked, were cured and humbled.

Did this old homeopathic plan
Give his first hint to Hahnemann?
It suited Peter's thought;
To all New England it is plain,
That he who reared yon brazen vane
Effected what he sought.

Within that hoppergrass's ken
Stand throngs of sturdy marketmen,
Knives sharp, and saws well filed,
Frocked in white linen from the wash,
With "ball-heaped pyramids" of squash
And cabbage round them piled;

Turnips, potatoes, onions, beets,
All vegetables and all meats;
Sheep brought through Hoosac tunnel,—
From Charlestown, pork; from Brighton, beef;
Butter in barrels, lard in leaf,—
Heaven bless St. Peter Faneuil!

*The word locust is derived from these two latin words, which mean a burned place, and are indicative of the barrenness which their depredations create.

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